

Information Technology Newsletter

(Division of Communications, State of Nebraska)

The Mission of Information Technology is to serve the citizens of Nebraska by providing premier information technology leadership, policy and operations which facilitate an effective, responsive, and efficient government.

Fax Machine Surplus

By Norma White

Effective July 1, 2005, agencies who have purchased their fax machines off of the approved Division of Communications fax listing may surplus their machines directly to State Surplus, in accordance with the surplus procedures established by DAS-Materiel. All proceeds from the sale of your fax machine will be deposited into the fund that you provide to State Surplus. You no longer have to send your FAX MACHINES back to DOC. This is for the surplus of fax machines under \$1500.00 only. Fax machines over \$1500.00 will still be purchased and surplus by the Division of Communications and will remain as DOC fixed assets.

Surplus Property and the Division of Communications have worked together to set up the following guidelines to assist agencies in making the surplus of fax machines work smoothly.

1. Only working fax machines should be sent to Surplus Property.
2. Non working fax machines can be recycled through CP Recovery of Omaha. CP Recovery can be reached at 402/331-1630, ask for Jeremy. They are in Lincoln each week.
3. Tape all loose parts/ pieces and manual to the machine and remove stored numbers.

4. If your fax machine is not local, please feel free to use your local recycle program.
5. NO fax machine working or not, that is tagged with a Division of Communications fixed asset tag, can be sent to Surplus Property, they must be returned to DOC or contact Vicki McElroy at DOC for a Certificate of Destruct, Vicki can be reached at 402/471-2761.

As a reminder, the process to procure a fax machine has not changed and the DOC approved fax list can be found at <http://www.doc.state.ne.us/telecomm/Facsimiles.html>

If you have any questions or concerns about this procedure, please feel free to contact Norma at the Division of Communications 402-471-3562 or Gregg at Surplus Property, 402-471-3896.

Server Desktop Support

By Ken Mitchell

A reorganization in the summer of 2005 included the transfer of the IMS Networking and PCLAN team to the Division of Communications. In general, DOC and IMS concluded that the networking and open systems support were more closely aligned with DOC's mission.

PCLAN became DOC Server Support and DOC Workstation Support. These teams continue to work with the IMS Help Desk (402-471-4636) on problems and projects related to Intel and AMD platforms.

Workstation Support deals with a wide spectrum of hardware and software found on desktop systems of many agencies and commissions. The variety of hardware and software found in the field is staggering. When responding to a call for PC assistance, a support analyst sits down to an unknown quantity and applies a progression of increasingly complex diagnostic routines. Usually, the problem is resolved, but occasionally basic hardware failure or the damage done by viruses and other malicious software is just too extensive to remedy. In such cases, the analysts are expert at software re-installation and computer imaging.

Workstation support is also developing a standard set of hardware and software to offer the agencies and commissions. Providing a selection of major brand PCs loaded with the most popular business software, they seek to increase efficiency and provide a stable, predictable environment while decreasing downtime and support costs. In addition, the analysts are placing a high priority on identifying programs that are detrimental to customer computers and networks. Often these programs are downloaded and installed from the Internet by state workers seeking additional computer functionality. Unfortunately, unscrupulous programmers write code that sends data from the state computer hard drives to unknown people on the Internet. This sort of spyware or malware slows both computers and networks to a crawl. Identifying and eliminating this malware is an important goal for Workstation Support.

The Server Support team directly manages Intel servers with disk storage in the amount of 12,018,778,113,024 bytes – or

twelve terabytes in industry parlance. Surprisingly, in modern data centers this is considered a moderate amount of disk storage. The twelve terabytes of storage is installed on Intel servers directly managed by the Server Support team, which does not include a large Intel server installation in the 501 Building for Lotus Notes, Secretary of State, the Legislature, CJIS, NIS, or HHSS.

With a new emphasis on efficiency and inter-agency shared services, the server team is partnering with the Legislature to increase the usage of an expanded Storage Area Network (SAN). The SAN will initially provide four additional terabytes of storage for those servers designated as “heavy hitters,” either because of large data requirements or continuous load. Among other things, the SAN will enable Server Support to more effectively backup and restore data for these “heavy hitter” servers.

The Server team is also in the process of upgrading the centralized State of Nebraska (STONE) tape backup library, both to increase library capacity and to interface directly with the SAN. The upgraded library will hold 120 tapes, each containing up to 520 Gigabytes, for a total on-demand storage capacity of 62,400,000,000,000 (62 terabytes). The combination of the tape library upgrade and the SAN will allow Server support to offer much more flexible and powerful services to their customers, providing seamless and transparent data protection on a 24 x 7 basis.

Phone Line Cramming

By Tina Seacrest

The State of Nebraska is a victim of Cramming! What is “Cramming”?

This is the practice of placing unauthorized, misleading, or deceptive charges on landline telephone bills. Entities that fraudulently “cram” people

appear to rely largely on confusing telephone bills in order to mislead consumers into paying for services that they did not authorize or receive.

THIS IS HAPPENING TO OUR BUSINESS LINES AT WORK...read below to find out more information.

If you use your State of Nebraska line to enter a contest, or just enter a State phone number in a field on a form or website (for contacting you), the State number is what will get "Crammed".

Monthly invoices currently are being generated and sent to the State of Nebraska for services and products not authorized!

- **Contest Entry Forms and Websites.** You fill out a contest entry form, thinking you're entering to win a prize or Free Shopping Spree. In fact, some unscrupulous promoter is using the contest to get your phone number, enroll you for a calling card or some similar service, and bill you on your phone bill. The disclosure on the entry form, which is very difficult to comprehend and in very fine print, says that by completing the form, you authorized the service. You may never get the service – just the bills. This can happen by entering a work phone number also.

Here are some tips to help you as a State of Nebraska employee avoid cramming scams.

As an employee, you may or may not have access to your agency phone bill for monthly review.

- **Don't call from your work phone.** With current technology, companies can get your phone number when you call them, using

a process similar to caller ID. Once they have your number, a devious company can cram charges onto your phone bill. What's more, since this technology can automatically bill the phone number that is called from, other people using your phone can cause charges to be billed to your phone.

- **Carefully read the fine print before you fill out contest forms,** especially if they ask for your phone number. Likewise, read the fine print before you place a call in response to a sweepstakes promotion. ***Do not use your work phone number as your contact information.***
- **Be cautious about calling unfamiliar 800 numbers.** Be especially wary if you're told to enter codes, leave your name, or answer "yes" to prompts. Unscrupulous entertainment providers may use this ruse to send you a bill.

With all State of Nebraska phone service, please be reminded that the use of your phone number is subject to the State of Nebraska Information Technology **Acceptable Use Policy.**

For additional information, contact Tina Seacrest at 402-471-4702, email tseacres@notes.state.ne.us or Lana Brox at 402-471-7890, email lbrox@notes.state.ne.us

Legislative Bills Affecting Information Technology

By Tom Rolfes

Here are highlights of three important pieces of legislation.

LB 343

LB 343 modifies the Nebraska Public Safety Communication System Act and removes the SCAN Board and the Wireless Communications Advisory Board from statute. The bill eliminates the duties for the NITC to assist the former wireless advisory board. The Division of Communications is responsible for developing interoperability standards and coordinating state and regional communications systems. This includes:

1. Focus on developing regional communications systems.
2. Local and state agencies must develop interoperable communications plans before receiving state and federal funding for communications systems.
3. The Division of Communications will adopt standards for interoperable communications.
4. Creates a Regional Interoperability Advisory Board within the DOC.

The bill requires the Division of Communications to provide office space, equipment and technical assistance to the board. The fiscal impact to support the board should be minimal.

LB 645

In the final weeks of the 2005 session, the Nebraska Legislature restricted the provision of broadband services by state agencies, political subdivisions, and public power.

The appropriate role of public entities in the provision of broadband services was hotly debated in many states this year. The flurry of legislation across the country was spurred largely by the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Nixon v. Missouri Municipal League* which clarified that states have the right to prohibit municipalities from providing telecommunications services.

LB 645 prohibits state agencies or political subdivisions (except public power suppliers) from providing wholesale or retail broadband services. Exemptions are made for services authorized by statute and provided by Educational Service Units (ESUs), the Division of Communications, the University of Nebraska, and Community Colleges. Public entities may still own, lease, or sell dark fiber. Additionally, LB 645 states that the prohibition does not apply to services which a state agency or political subdivision was authorized to provide and was providing prior to January 1, 2005. These exemptions will allow the State of Nebraska to continue aggregating telecommunications services through Network Nebraska.

LB 645 prohibits public power suppliers from providing retail broadband services except those that were authorized and provided prior to January 1, 2005. The bill places a moratorium on the provision of wholesale broadband services by public power suppliers until Dec. 31, 2007.

Internal use of broadband or telecommunications services by public entities is permitted.

LB 645 also creates the Broadband Services Task Force to study issues related to the provision of broadband by public entities. The task force will consist of 18 members including:

- 3 members appointed by the Executive Board of the Legislative Council.
- 6 members appointed by the Governor (including one representative for consumers from each congressional district)
- 3 members of the Public Service Commission,
- 3 members of the Nebraska Power Review Board or their designees

- 3 members of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission or their designees

Appointments must be made by the end of September 2005. The task force will meet by mid-November 2005 and will submit a report by December 31, 2006. \$200,000 was appropriated in LB 71A for expenses related to hiring a facilitator and conducting the study.

LB 689

LB 689, advanced by the Education Committee and approved by the Governor on May 31, creates the Distance Education Enhancement Task Force, describes membership and assigns expectations and a deadline for the work of the Task Force. LB 689A, also approved, appropriates \$10,000 for the work of the Task Force.

LB 689, introduced by Senators Stuhr and Raikes, originally contained funding of \$20-\$30 million to accomplish what the Department of Education termed "Distance Learning: Infrastructure, Training, and Support" which was a component of another omnibus funding bill LB 467, introduced by Senator Byars. The main impetus for LB 689 funding was recognition that 10 telecommunications contracts affecting the high bandwidth access of 180 education sites in Nebraska would expire from 2006-2012, with no existing funds for replacement and upgrade of equipment. The loss of high bandwidth access would greatly affect the Internet and distance learning services for these school districts. After the Education Committee hearing on February 7 and two rounds of debate on the floor, LB 689 was amended by AM 7082 and passed by a 48-0-1 vote.

The Distance Education Enhancement Task Force lists 10 issues that can be contained in its report of recommended Legislation and proposed policy changes which are due to the Clerk of the

Legislature and the Education, Transportation/Telecommunications and Appropriations Committees of the Legislature by December 31, 2005:

- (1) The development of a high capacity, scalable telecommunications infrastructure;
- (2) The development of an Internet protocol-based network to interconnect all existing and future distance education and videoconferencing facilities;
- (3) Upgrades of current telecommunications equipment;
- (4) Training and support programs for educators in the development and use of distance learning;
- (5) The transfer of distance education coordination responsibilities from distance education consortia to educational service units on or before July 1, 2007;
- (6) Statewide coordination for distance education offerings;
- (7) Potential funding sources;
- (8) The establishment of an equitable and affordable financing system for both equipment and usage;
- (9) The establishment of a system that allows school districts to purchase quality distance education offerings from other school districts either directly or with educational service units acting as fiscal agents;
- (10) Statewide provision of other technology-based services.

The Distance Enhancement Task Force shall include membership from the following entities, with membership named by June 15, 2005 (**names included**):

- (1A) The chairperson of the Education Committee of the Legislature; **Senator Ron Raikes of Lincoln**
- (1B) One other member of the Education Committee; **Senator Elaine Stuhr of Bradshaw**

- (2) The chairperson of the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Legislature; **Senator Tom Baker of Trenton**
- (3) The chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature; **Senator Don Pederson of North Platte**

Appointed by the Legislative Council

- (4) One representative of educational service units; **Al Schneider of ESU 5-Beatrice**
- (5) One representative of distance education consortia; **Nigel Buss of ESU 8-Neligh**
- (6) One representative of the State Department of Education who shall have expertise in technology infrastructure; **Mike Kozak of the NDE Technology Center**
- (7) One representative of the Public Service Commission; **Commissioner Gerry Vap of District 5-McCook**
- (9) Two representatives of postsecondary education who have expertise in technology infrastructure, distance education, or dual-enrollment courses; **Jack Huck of Southeast Community College and John Horvath of UNK**
- (11) Two members who are either school district superintendents or public school principals; **Dan Hoelsing of Laurel-Concord/Coleridge School Districts and Michael Cuning of Sutherland/Hershey School Districts**
- (12) One representative of the Nebraska Educational Telecommunications Commission who has expertise in technology infrastructure or distance education; **Commissioner John Heil of Omaha**

Appointed by the Governor

- (8) Two representatives of the Nebraska Information Technology Commission; **Lt. Governor Sheehy of Hastings and Commissioner Eric Brown of Lexington**
- (10) One representative of the Governor; **State CIO Brenda Decker of Lincoln**

The recommendations of the Task Force have the potential to greatly change the capacity and educational technology applications available to K-12 schools and higher education entities within the State. It could also affect the way that Network Nebraska, the statewide telecommunications multipurpose backbone, provides services to education entities.

The Education Committee of the Legislature, the Transportation and Telecommunications Committee of the Legislature, the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, the State Department of Education, and the Nebraska Information Technology Commission shall provide research and administrative support for the task force.

Disaster Recovery

By Dave Berkland

Additions have been made to the disaster recovery planning documentation. The disaster recovery procedures from the CIO, Division of Communications and IMServices have been merged into one repository of disaster recovery procedures. What was once referred to as the IMServices Contingency Plan for Disaster Recovery is now referred to as the DAS Information Technology Contingency Plan for Disaster Recovery. The new plan includes base plan information as well as its related administrative and technical recovery procedures.

Continuity of Operations Planning and Disaster Recovery Planning

Recently, DAS began the process of planning for continuity of operations – maintaining essential government functions after a disruptive event regardless of whether the event was caused by an act of nature or by the act of a human. Each division has started the process of gathering information that will eventually lead to a continuity of operations plan (COOP).

A small group of staff from the CIO's office, the Division of Communications and IMServices has been meeting for several months in order to move forward with disaster recovery planning. Since there is overlap between continuity of operations planning and disaster recovery planning and because the same staff members are involved in both types of planning, continuity of operations planning and disaster recovery planning efforts have been merged. This combined group of staff members will be meeting weekly to move forward with both continuity of operations and disaster recovery planning.

Test Your Equipment

By Erin Schmit

When you receive a cell phone, pager, or other wireless device, how do you know it works? One of the easiest ways to find out is to test it.

For cellular phones, making a test call to the cell phone and from the cell phone will assure you that it is working. Leave yourself a test voicemail and try to retrieve it. Also, sending yourself a text message relieves issues of whether or not this feature is working. Please do not rely on assumptions. A quick 2 minute test will do the job.

For pagers, make a test call and type in your number. Make sure the pager

responds and see how quickly it responds. Knowing these aspects ahead of time will save you headaches in the future.

If you have questions about this or testing other wireless equipment, please contact Erin Schmit at eschmit@doc.state.ne.us or at 402-471-6391.

Congratulations

By Jayne Scofield

Congratulations to the following employees within the Information Technology divisions of DAS for receiving special recognitions.

Mike Jeffres - Wireless Manager was named DAS Manager of the Year, Kathy Wenzl - IT Infrastructure Support Analyst for the Desktop/Server Team was named DAS Employee of the Year and Nan Hanway was selected as a runner-up for Employee of the Year.

Telemarketing Calls to State Cellular Phones

By Beth Ascher

Division of Enterprise Technology
State of Wisconsin

Multiple emails have been circulating and causing concern about telemarketing calls to state cellular telephones. These emails indicate that efforts to create a Wireless 411 Directory will result in unwanted and costly telemarketing calls to wireless devices. The 1991 Telemarketing Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) makes it illegal for solicitation calls to be made to wireless telephone numbers without clear permission from the individual to whom a number has been assigned.

Providers participating in the Wireless 411 Directory have clearly stated that numbers will be listed on an opt-in basis only. That means consumers have to choose to be included in the directory. The wireless

directory will not be printed in a telephone book, nor will it be available on the Internet. This directory will not be sold to third parties or sold to telemarketers.

The State's cellular service provider cautions that state numbers could be on a list for sale to telemarketers if a state cellular number was given out as a primary contact number for a purchase or an application.

If your state issued cellular number was given out in this manner, it is advised the cellular number be registered with the Federal Do Not Call List at www.donotcall.gov or calling toll free 888-382-1222 from the device.

There is no harm registering state cellular numbers, however it is not necessary for the vast majority of state cellular users.

The Enterprise Cellular Policy helped to minimize any reason a state cellular number would be on a telemarketing list by discouraging personal use of the cell phone. If an agency feels there's a problem with telemarketing calls to one of their lines they may opt to register the line.

Mobile to Mobile Calling

By Erin Schmit

Talk free to other wireless customers, with Mobile to Mobile calling. Whether you are keeping in touch with co-workers, friends or family, Mobile to Mobile calling is a convenient way to do it. With this feature, you can call any cellular phone with the same vendor for free within your local home network. We now have Mobile to Mobile calling on all of our State cellular phones.

When you are roaming and you do not have a nationwide plan, your mobile to mobile minutes will not be free. When in a home network area, you will not see a roaming indicator at all. In a preferred partner's network, the roaming indicator will flash or blink. When you are roaming, the roaming indicator will continuously be present on the screen. Most phones also display "Roaming" on the screen as well.

If you make calls to other cellular phones, Mobile to Mobile calling will help you save money on your monthly bill. Feel free to contact Erin Schmit at the Division of Communications for questions on this or other features at 402/471-6391 or eschmit@doc.state.ne.us

Directory Listing Closing Dates:

Archer	8/15/05
Falls City	9/15/05
Hooper	8/01/05
Nebraska City	9/15/05

For more information, contact Renee at 402/471-4701.